

Message Text

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54

ACTION PM-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 MC-02 CIAE-00 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 COME-00 ACDA-19 EB-11 SAJ-01 OMB-01 DRC-01

/138 W

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R 201245Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9454

SECDEFENSE WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM

USCINCEUR GER

USDELMC BELGIUM

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 7402

NOFORN

STATE ALSO FOR COMMERCE: USCINCEUR FOR ECJ7

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, BEXP, BE

SUBJECT: REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT FOR BELGIUM F-104G'S

REF: (A) BRUSSELS 7369; (B) BRUSSELS 7280

1. ON 17 DECEMBER, AFTER A JOINT MEETING BETWEEN HEADS
OF PLANS AND PROGRAMS SECTIONS OF BOTH COUNTRIES, THE
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BELGIAN AIR FORCE (BAF) AND THE ROYAL NETHERLANDS AIR

FORCE (RNLAf) HAVE DECIDED TO APPROACH THEIR RESPECTIVE CHIEFS AND THROUGH THEM THEIR RESPECTIVE MINISTRIES OF DEFENSE (MOD) ON THE POSSIBILITY OF A JOINT ACQUISITION PROGRAM FOR REPLACEMENT OF BOTH COUNTRIES' CURRENT F-104 FIGHTER AIRCRAFT. A DECISION ON THIS POSSIBILITY IS EXPECTED WITHIN 60 DAYS IF GOVERNMENTAL CONCURRENCE IS OBTAINED.

2. OUR SOURCE AGAIN STRESSED THAT THERE IS A GREAT DEAL OF PRESSURE BY BOTH FRENCH AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY AND THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT TO MAKE A DECISION FOR THE MIRAGE SUPER F-1. THE EVALUATION OF THE BAF WILL SHOW THAT WHILE U.S. CONTENDERS ARE SUPERIOR IN AN MILITARY SENSE, THE FRENCH ENTRY IS ACCEPTABLE TO THE BAF FOR ITS CURRENT MISSION. ONE OF THE BAF'S PRIME CONCERNS IS THAT THE FRENCH SUPER F-1 IS NOT AN INVENTORY ITEM IN THE FRENCH AF (FAF). THE FAF HAS CONTRACTED FOR AN AIRCRAFT CALLED THE MIRAGE F-1 BUT WE HAVE BEEN TOLD BY THE BAF THAT THIS AIRCRAFT IS NOT REPEAT IS NOT THE SAME MODEL WHICH THE FRENCH COMPANY IS ATTEMPTING TO SELL TO BOTH BELGIUM AND THE NETHERLANDS. THIS SUPER F-1 OR "EXPORT MODEL" HAS NOT BEEN SELECTED AS A FIGHTER AIRCRAFT FOR THE FAF. THE MAJOR DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO AIRCRAFT ARE THE ENGINE AND AVIONICS AND SOME STRUCTURAL FEATURES.

3. THE BAF IS CONCERNED THAT THEY WILL END UP IN THE SAME SITUATION AS THEY HAVE WITH THEIR MIRAGE 5'S; THAT IS, THEY WILL NOT BE ABLE TO GET ADEQUATE SUPPLY SUPPORT IF THEY PURCHASE THIS FRENCH MIRAGE SUPER F-1. SEVERAL SOURCES WITHIN THE BELGIAN AIR STAFF HAVE SAID THAT IF BELGIUM AND/OR NL PURCHASE THE SUPER F-1, THEN THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT WOULD INSIST THAT THE FAF PURCHASE THIS MODEL ALSO, THEREBY ASSURING A SPARE PARTS SUPPLY.

4. THE FACT REMAINS THAT IN ORDER FOR THE SUPER F-1 TO BE MANUFACTURED, AVIATION MARCEL DASSAULT MUST ALSO HAVE CO-DEVELOPERS. A RUMOR WHICH WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO VERIFY INVOLVES THE BELGIAN INDUSTRY BELIEF THAT THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT WILL UNDERWRITE THE EXPENSE OF DEVELOPING THE SNECMA M53 FOR THE SUPER F-1. THIS ENGINE WILL
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SUPPOSEDLY TEST FLY IN A MIRAGE F-1 IN SEPTEMBER 74
IF CURRENT PROGRAMS ARE REALIZED. STRAUSS-HUPE

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